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FEMA

Disaster News

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FEMA JOINS STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS IN PREPARING FOR WINTER STORMS IN CALIFORNIA

PASADENA, Calif. - The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is joining state and local officials in encouraging preparations for winter storms that could cause flooding, mud and debris flow in California.

“Flooding can happen quickly,” said Mike Hall, FEMA’s federal coordinating officer overseeing the recovery from the recent Southern California wildfires. “Being prepared can save lives and property.”

FEMA’s Region IX Office in Oakland activated its Regional Response Coordinating Center at 8 a.m. Friday and sent a liaison to the State Operations Center at the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services.

In Southern California, FEMA’s Joint Field Office in Pasadena began operating around the clock, starting Friday, and sent a liaison to the state of California’s Southern Emergency Regional Operation Center.

FEMA also has placed its logistical distribution center at Moffett Field on alert. If needed, supplies could be shipped quickly from Moffett in Santa Clara County to disaster areas. The supplies warehoused at Moffett include beds, cots, meals ready-to-eat (MREs), blankets, tarps, plastic sheeting and water.

While federal, state and local agencies are preparing for the storm, disaster officials encourage individuals and families to plan for emergencies.

Recommendations include:

- Be prepared to tune in to radio and television broadcasts that provide vital emergency information. Have a battery-powered radio on hand in case of power outages.
- Know the evacuation routes in your area. Listen to local officials and take action when they advise you to evacuate.
- Find out what you can do to be safe, such as creating a family disaster plan.

Southern Californians can find a wealth of information on preparing for a flood or other disasters by going online to www.ready.gov, www.fema.gov or www.oes.ca.gov.

Typically, severe storms can cause flooding throughout California. But this year, federal and state officials teamed up to deal with a new challenge – the possibility of increased flooding, mud flow and debris flow near hillsides stripped of vegetation by wildfires.

Federal and state experts formed a Multi-Agency Support Group that studied the burned areas and issued reports and maps revealing the potential impact of the wildfires to people, animals, property and downstream resources. FEMA coordinated this coalition with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and multiple state, local, federal, and county agencies.

These post-fire hazard maps have helped emergency managers and public works officials formulate erosion control projects, install alert and warning systems, plan evacuations and take other steps to protect the public. Specifically, information on the maps and in the detailed reports has been used to develop county-wide reverse 911 call down listings, determine sites for siren evacuation alert installations and also supported federal and state agencies as they prioritize control efforts.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness mitigation and recovery efforts.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 1-800-462-7585.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.

Temporary housing assistance from FEMA does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for additional assistance under the part of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible. FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan, and eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA's temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.

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